

IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION OF GRADE XI STUDENTS OF SMA NEGERI 4 PALU THROUGH KWL STRATEGY

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Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah penerapan strategi KWL dapat memperbaiki pemahaman membaca siswa kelas XI di SMA Negeri 4 Palu dan untuk mengetahui bagaimana penerapan strategi ini dalam mengaktifkan dan memotivasi siswa. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah quasi-eksperimental dengan nonequivalent pretest-posttest kelompok kontrol sebagai desainnya. Sampel dari penelitian ini dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Peneliti memilih kelas XI MIA 2 sebagai kelas eksperimen dan kelas XI MIA 1 sebagai kelas control. Instrumen pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah lembar observasi, kuesionner, dan test. Data dianalisa menggunakan statistik uji-t dan metode deskriptif. Berdasarkan hasil test, ditemukan bahwa nilai t_{counted} (2.08) lebih tinggi dibandingkan nilai t_{table} (1.998). Nilai rata-rata siswa pada kelas control meningkat dari 68.9 menjadi 80.5 setelah mendapatkan perlakuan. Selanjutnya, penerapan strategi KWL juga secara signifikan mengaktifkan dan memotivasi siswa di dalam kelas. Hal ini didukung oleh hasil dari observasi dan kuesionner. Setelah menganalisa kuesionner secara statistik, ditemukan bahwa nilai t_{counted} (2.85) lebih tinggi dibandingkan nilai t_{table} (2.042 dan nilai rata-rata motivasi siswa meningkat dari 31.88 menjadi 33.05. Selanjutnya, hasil dari observasi menunjukkan bahwa sembilan puluh empat persen (94%) siswa berpartisipasi secara aktif selama proses pembelajaran. Berdasarkan hasil test, kuesionner, dan observasi, ditemukan bahwa hipotesa alternatif (H_a) diterima dan hipotesa nol (H_0) ditolak. Dengan kata lain; (1) Penerapan strategi KWL secara signifikan memperbaiki pemahaman membaca siswa kelas XI di SMA Negeri 4 Palu, dan (2) Penerapan strategi KWL secara signifikan mengaktifkan dan memotivasi siswa di dalam kelas.

Kata Kunci: Memperbaiki, Pemahaman Membaca, dan Strategi KWL

Reading is an activity that people do to get information they need. The information can be obtained from a number of sources, such as books, articles, magazines, or newspapers. Reading a source of information can help people broadening their knowledge. It is why reading becomes an important activity in human life. Reading is also considered as a process of communication between a writer and reader(s). It involves the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret the information appropriately.

In the context of education, reading is one of the language skills that have to be mastered by the students. It is taught integratedly with three other skills - listening,

speaking, and writing. Reading skill has been introduced to the students of secondary school. The aim of teaching reading in this level is to enable students to understand and comprehend an English text. The students are expected to be able to perceive the meaning explicitly stated in any kinds of reading text, such as report, narrative, and analytical exposition (Kemendikbud, 2013). Therefore the students need to improve their reading comprehension in order to achieve this goal.

Generally, many students got three common problems in reading class based on researcher's preliminary research. First, for most students, reading was considered as a difficult and confusing activity. Second, lots

of students lacked skill to find out the main idea of a reading text. They often got difficult to describe what the text was about. This problem was also faced by the students of SMA Negeri 4 Palu where they got difficult to comprehend the explicit information of English texts and find out the answers of reference questions. In other words, it can be said that they lacked literal and reference comprehension. Third, when the students were asked to read an English text, some of them directly opened their dictionary to find out the meaning of unfamiliar words. In contrast, the students who had no dictionaries did nothing with the text.

Dealing with the problems mentioned above, the teachers need to apply a strategy or technique that can help students to solve such problems. This way will influence the teacher's quality in teaching reading. One of the ways that can be used is by applying KWL strategy. The KWL strategy is a reading strategy that was originally developed by Ogle (1986). This strategy represents what students know about a given topic (K), what they want to know about the topic (W), and what they have learned about the topic (L). All three parts of the technique focus on a different aspect of student's individual learning style. The strategy is effective in teaching reading comprehension because it helps students to be active thinkers during the teaching reading process because it encourages them to ask questions and think about ideas while reading. This strategy would also help students feel more comfortable with their comprehension of a subject since it goes through each step separately so that comprehension comes easier (Glazer, 1998). The KWL strategy assists teachers in activating students' schemata of a subject and encourage inquisition in reading class. Schema (plural: schemata) is one of the important knowledge sources and refers to knowledge, experience, and information which are already stored in one's memory. When schema is activated, it

involves the process of how the different knowledge parts stored are matched to make meaning of text.

In line with above explanation, the researcher conducted a research on applying KWL strategy to improve students' reading comprehension. The research was conducted to Grade XI students of SMA Negeri 4 Palu. As mentioned earlier, based on the researcher's preliminary research, there were two main problems found in this school; (1) the students lacked literal and reference comprehension where they get difficult to find out the explicit information and the answers of reference questions in the text; (2) they were less-motivated and passive during the teaching of reading. Therefore, the researcher would like to solve these problems and improve the reading comprehension of Grade XI students of SMA Negeri 4 Palu through KWL strategy.

Based on the background stated above, the researcher formulated her research questions as follows:

1. Does applying KWL strategy improve reading comprehension of Grade XI students of SMA Negeri 4 Palu?
2. Does applying KWL strategy activate and motivate students in reading class?

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To find out whether the application of KWL strategy improves reading comprehension of Grade XI students of SMA Negeri 4 Palu
2. To find out how the application of this strategy activates and motivates them in the reading class.

Literature Review

Reading Comprehension

There are a number of definitions about reading comprehension. Firstly, Heilman, Blair, and Ruple (1981) define that reading comprehension is a process of transferring the written ideas through meaningful interpretation and interaction with language.

Second, reading comprehension is generally known as an interactive mental process between a reader’s linguistic knowledge, knowledge of the world, and knowledge about a given topic (Aebersold and Field, 1997; Mohammadi and Abidin, 2011). Thirdly, Radojevic (2009) reports that reading comprehension relies on two kinds of information: that which is received from the text and that which is retrieved from reader’s memory. In other words, reading comprehension can be simply defined as a process that involves actively constructing meaning among the part of the text, and between the text and personal experience.

Comprehension always involves thinking whenever a reader is reading any printed information. Rubin (1982) states that there are a number of levels in the hierarchy of thinking, thus there are also various levels of comprehension. Harris and Smith (1986) suggest that the teaching reading should be started from the low to higher levels of comprehension respectively; literal comprehension, inferential/interpretative comprehension, critical reading, and creative reading.

KWL Strategy

KWL strategy is a pre-reading activity which was developed to help students use important background information before reading nonfiction text. The KWL strategy consists of accessing what students Know, determining what students Want to find out, recalling what students have Learned. For the first two steps of KWL, students and the teacher engage in oral discussion. The students begin by reflecting on their knowledge about a topic, brainstorming a group list of ideas about the topic, and identifying categories of information. Next, they create lists of things that they want to know about the topic. They may write it in the form of questions. In the last step of the strategy, students read the material or text and

share what they have learned. The following is the example of KWL Chart.

Topic: Cheetah

What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I have Learned
a. They are animals. b. They live in Africa in grasslands/ plains areas.	a. How fast are they? b. How and what do they eat? c. Are they more like dogs or lions?	a. Cheetahs are very fast. b. Cheetahs evolved from cat-like mammals that lived more than four million years ago.

(Adapted from Samaikomsun, 2012)

Figure 1. KWL Chart

The KWL content comprehension strategy has a before-during-after structure. This structure serves several purposes as follows (Szabo, 2006):

1. Through brainstorming, students can activate prior knowledge of the topic and this activity will develop the student’s interest, curiosity and motivation;
2. It helps them to determine what they want to learn about and to design their own questions so they have their own purpose for reading;
3. It helps each student to monitor his/her comprehension as it allows the students to assess their comprehension;
4. It provides an opportunity for students to expand on ideas.

The Application of KWL Strategy in Teaching Reading Comprehension

The KWL strategy is first taught to students by introducing and explaining the strategy to each of the student groups, or even to the group as a whole. After introducing the strategy, the teacher then divides the students into several groups and distributes the reading materials to each group of students. The teacher starts off by making three columns on

the whiteboard and indicating the three parts by putting a K in the first column, a W in the second column, and an L in the third column. Next, the teacher asks the students to make the column in their own paper. Afterward, teacher asks each group to find out the topic of the text and work with their own column. After having students complete the KWL columns, the teacher guides them in answering the comprehension questions of the text. Finally, at the end of the class, the teacher and the students will draw a conclusion about the topic that has been discussed in the class.

The three steps of KWL provide the systematical stages of reading to proceed and set the purpose of lesson, as follows (Samaikomsun, 2012):

1) Pre-reading activity

In this stage, before the students begin to read, the teacher leads in the activity to recall students' prior knowledge by giving them the topic that they are going to read. The teacher then examines what students know about the given topic and ask them to write it in column K. Next, the teacher allows the students to make questions about what they want to know from the text and write them in column W.

2) While-reading activity

In while-reading activity, the teacher asks them to read the text and encourages the students to find out the answers of their questions in column W. They can compose more questions if they want to know more about the topic. There might be some questions that cannot be answered, but they will be discussed in the next stage.

3) Post-reading activity

Finally, in post-reading activity, the teacher asks the students to jot down what they have learned from the text in column L. She/he lets them to ensure whether questions they wrote in column W have been answered. Students discuss and takes turn asking and answering the questions that they cannot find the answers. The teachers may also involve in this process.

The Application of KWL Strategy toward Students' Motivation in Reading Class

Motivation is a theoretical construct used to explain behavior. It represents the reasons for people's actions, desires, and needs. Motivation can also be defined as one's direction to behavior or what causes a person to want to repeat a behavior and vice versa (Elliot and Covington, 2001). Motivation is the purpose or psychological cause of an action. Motivation has been shown to have roots in physiological, behavioral, cognitive, and social areas. For example, when someone eats food to satisfy their hunger, or when a student does his/her work in school because he/she wants a good grade. Both show a similar connection between what he does and why he does it.

KWL strategy has good contribution toward students' motivation in the reading class. This strategy has three stages in which each stage helps the students to explore their reading comprehension. In the pre-reading stage, the students get enhance to gain more vocabulary before reading. Moreover, making questions encourage them to read and help them to get the ideas. In while-reading stage, the students have opportunity to set their own goal of reading. It helps them to focus on the ideas. In this stage, the students can monitor their understanding toward the questions they compose in column W. In post-reading stage, they will be able to answer the questions they set and write in column L. They have a chance to reflect on what they have learned from the texts. It can be said that the students will be satisfied with the use of KWL strategy in teaching reading comprehension.

RESEARCH METHOD

The design of this research was quasi-experimental - nonequivalent group pretest-posttest control group. The sample consists of two classes; experimental and control class. Both classes were given pretest and posttest, but only experimental class was given the

treatment through the KWL strategy. The control group was taught by using conventional teaching. The population of this research was grade XI science major students of SMA Negeri 4 Palu which consist of seven parallel classes. The total number of population is 234 students. The sample of this research was selected by using purposive sampling technique because there is no random assignment of subjects. The researcher intentionally chose XI MIA 2 as the experimental class and XI MIA 1 as the control class. There are two kinds of variable in this research; independent variable and dependent variable. The independent variable of this research is KWL strategy, and the dependent variables are students' reading comprehension and motivation.

In this research, the researcher used observation, questionnaire, and paper and pencil method to collect the data. The paper and pencil method was in the forms of pretest and posttest. Therefore, the research instruments used in this research were observation checklists, questionnaire items and tests. Treatment was conducted after giving pretest and it was administered to the experimental class. It was done in eight meetings. The data of this research were analyzed statistically and descriptively. To explain the result of the test, the researcher used t_{counted} formula as proposed by Gay (1996:486) as follows:

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{SS_1 + SS_2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}\right) \left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}\right)}}$$

Next, the result of the questionnaire was also analyzed statistically by applying formula proposed by Arikunto (2006: 308) as follows:

$$\Sigma x^2 d = \Sigma d^2 - \frac{(\Sigma d)^2}{N}$$

Then the result of observation was interpreted descriptively to support the result of the test and the questionnaire.

To measure whether the hypothesis of this research is rejected or accepted, the researcher used testing hypothesis. There are two kinds of hypothesis in this research; alternative hypothesis and null hypothesis. The criteria of the testing hypothesis are as follows:

1. If the t_{counted} value is greater than t_{table} value, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. It means that (1) applying KWL strategy significantly improves reading comprehension of Grade XI students of SMA Negeri 4 Palu and; (2) applying KWL strategy significantly activates and motivates students in reading class.
2. If the t_{counted} value is smaller than t_{table} value, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is rejected and the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. It means that (1) applying KWL strategy does not significantly improve reading comprehension of Grade XI students of SMA Negeri 4 Palu and; (2) applying KWL strategy does not significantly activate and motivate students in reading class.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the result of the test and non-test data, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. The result of tests shows that the t_{counted} value (2.08) is greater than t_{table} value (1.998) and the students' mean score of experimental class is improved from 68.9 to 80.5 after getting the treatment. Next, the result of questionnaire, the t_{counted} value (2.85) is greater than t_{table} value (2.042), and the mean of students' motivation score is improved from 31.88 to 33.05. Last, the result of observation shows that ninety four percent (94%) of students are actively participating during the teaching-learning process. Since there are two research questions in this research, the discussion is divided into two

parts; (1) Reading comprehension achievement, and (2) Motivation.

1) Reading Comprehension Achievement

The following discussion based on the findings of the first research question that aimed to find out whether applying KWL strategy improves students' reading comprehension. Regarding the result of pretest and posttest of experimental and control class, it is found that t_{counted} value (2.08) is greater than t_{table} value (1.998). The mean score of experimental class is improved from 68.9 to 80.5 after the implementation of treatment. This means that the KWL strategy helps students to improve their reading comprehension.

The students' reading comprehension achievements are improved because the students were trained to employ the KWL strategy during pre-, while-, and post-reading activities. As the use of KWL strategy, the students employed more after they learned through the procedure during the pre-, while-, and post-reading activities. The KWL strategy helped them overcome difficulties when reading text as they planned and monitored their comprehension. The KWL strategy which consisted of three stages of reading activities (the pre-, while-, and post-reading activities), can promote other reading frameworks. They are generating ideas, self-questioning, identifying the responses, summarizing reading, and reflecting the understanding. The following stages are discussed as the empirical use of the KWL strategy procedure during the pre, while, and post reading activities.

a. Generating ideas and self-questioning in pre-reading stage

According to the finding, it can be seen that the students who were taught by KWL strategy were encouraged to generate ideas before the teacher asked them to read the text. Students were asked to brainstorm their background knowledge. This is because readers should organize their reading before starting to read the text. Example of this was

taken from their notes in Column K (What I Know) includes these statements of the topic of the text about Komodo from the students:

"It is animal."

"This animal lives in Indonesia."

The students accessed their prior knowledge or schemata which promoted their use of background activation. This process also helped evaluate the students' background of the whole class. The students' interest according to the text was due to the questions they asked before moving on to read the text. Example of this was taken from their notes in Column W (Want to know):

"How long is Komodo?"

"What is the characteristic of Komodo?"

The students designed the task before reading and organized what they should do in the while-reading and post-reading stages. Students used self-questioning and goal-setting as instructed from KWL strategy. They constructed the questions by using their prior knowledge and they also planned before reading by designing the task.

The above explanation is in line with the result of observation checklist. In pre-reading stage, there are ninety four percent (94%) of students who are participating actively in the class. They made a list of what they know and what they wanted to find out about the given topic. They wrote the information in column K and W.

b. Identifying responses during while-reading stage

In the while-reading stage, the students controlled the steps and checked their task. The students selected the responses according to the question clarifying and jotting down the answers. Furthermore, the students read the text with concentration to develop their self-learning and the effort to explore the way that would occur. Example of this was taken from their notes in Column W (Want to know):

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>
<i>"How long is Komodo?"</i>	<i>"Komodo is about 8 feet (2.5 meters).</i>

“What is the characteristic of Komodo?” *Komodo has gray skin and weighs 150 pounds or more.*

This discussion is also supported by the result of questionnaire in while-reading stage. Ninety four percent (94%) of students noted down the answers for the questions they set in column W. As they read the text, they composed more questions because they wanted to know more about the topic. There were some questions that could not be answered, but the students discussed in the next stage.

c. Acquisition, summary, and reflection of reading in post-reading stage

In this stage, the students addressed the new knowledge which they obtained. In this process, the students attentively selected to acquire better. It also promoted the students’ acquisition. The students may consult their friends, use dictionary or ask the teacher to check their understanding. The students reread and summarize the text to clarify the acquisition between their friends. Example of this was taken from their notes in Column L (What I have Learned):

“Komodo is the largest lizard.”
 “It lives in the scrub and woodland of a few Indonesian islands.”

In relation to this explanation, the result of observation in post-reading stage shows that ninety four percent (94%) of students in the class reflected what they have learned from the text. They wrote the information in column L. Then the students were asked to answer the comprehension questions of the text with their group mates. They might also share their ideas about the questions that have not been answered yet in the while-reading stage.

2) Motivation

The following discussion is based on the finding of the second research question aiming at exploring how the implementation

KWL strategy motivates students in reading class. The overall results from questionnaire shows that t_{counted} value (2.85) is higher than t_{table} value (2.042). The mean of students’ motivation score is improved from 31.88 to 33.05. This indicates that KWL strategy has positive effects on students’ motivation in the class.

The KWL provides students with three reading stages; pre-, while-, and post-reading stage. In pre-reading stage, students are given opportunity to activate their schemata and generate ideas about the topic. They may write the information as much as they know in column K. Next, this KWL strategy helps them to determine what they want to learn about and to design their own questions in column W, therefore they could set their own purpose for reading. In while-reading stage, the students find out the answers of their questions in column W. They can compose more questions if they want to know more about the topic. This activity helps each student to monitor his/her comprehension and provides them an opportunity to expand their ideas. In while-reading stage, the students reflect on what they have learned about the topic and write the information in column L. The KWL strategy does encourage students to be active in the class and all activities provided are helpful to develop students’ motivation, interest, and curiosity.

The result of t_{counted} value of questionnaire (2.85) is also supported by the result of the observation checklist in which ninety four percent (94%) of students were participating actively during the lesson. The items in the observation checklist focused on three reading procedure. In pre-reading activities, the students began by making KWL chart on their worksheets. In this stage, the students are encouraged to access their prior knowledge of the topic and generate ideas. Ninety four percent (94%) of students listed what they know about the topic and wrote it in column K. After completing the column K, the students then generated information that

they want to find out in the text and put it in column W. During the eight meetings, the students were divided into some groups, thus they could share ideas with their group mates. In this stage, the students also have opportunity to set their own purpose of reading. This circumstance presented that the background activation stage perform well during the procedure. For that reason, this pre-reading stage gives positive effect on students' motivation.

In while-reading activities, the students have to follow the plan that has been set in pre-reading activities. This helps them to focus on the ideas. In this stage, ninety four percent (94%) of students found out the answers of their questions in column W and composed more questions because they wanted to know more about the topic. These activities are helpful to motivate the students to read better. The students can monitor their own comprehension because they have set their own purpose for reading in the pre-reading stage. This figures out that the use of monitoring understanding stage was practical during the procedure.

In post-reading activities, the students are able to find the answers for the questions they set. It is acceptable that the students understand the reading texts. The students have to ensure whether questions they wrote in column W have been answered. After reading the whole text, ninety four percent (94%) of students reflected what they have learned from the text and wrote it in column L. Then the students discussed the tasks with group mates. This is because the strategy put students on task which raised their eagerness to learn.

The results of this research indicate that the students employed the KWL strategy procedure effectively in reading class. The findings show that KWL strategy raise the students' eagerness of reading task and improve their ability in reading comprehension. It reveals that KWL strategy also encourages their background knowledge

or schema which connects the new knowledge and the schema with the experience and motivates students to recognize themselves what they obviously need to know. In summary, eliciting background knowledge, encouraging the students to make questions, monitoring to find out the information, and reflecting understanding have significantly improved students' reading comprehension, active participation and motivation in reading class.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

After analyzing the data in the previous chapter, the researcher concludes that the implementation of KWL Strategy significantly improves reading comprehension of Grade XI students of SMA Negeri 4 Palu. It is proven by the result of t_{counted} value (2.08) which is greater than t_{table} value (1.998). In addition, the students' mean score of experimental class is improved from 68.9 to 80.5 after getting the treatment. Furthermore, the implementation of KWL strategy also significantly activates and motivates students during the reading class. It is supported by the results of observation and questionnaire. In the result of questionnaire, the t_{counted} value (2.85) is greater than t_{table} value (2.042), and the mean of students' motivation score is improved from 31.88 to 33.05. Last, the result of observation shows that ninety four percent (94%) of students are actively participating during the teaching-learning process.

Suggestions

In accordance with the results obtained, the researcher would like to share some suggestions. First, the students should apply the KWL strategy in reading not only report text, but also other kinds of reading text, such as exposition, explanation, and descriptive text. Second, teachers of English should apply this strategy in teaching not only report text,

but also other kinds of reading text. They may also apply the KWL strategy in teaching not only literal comprehension, but also other levels of reading comprehension depending on the levels of students. Third, for other researchers who want to conduct a research on KWL strategy, it is better for them to apply this strategy in more than eight meetings in order to get the maximal result. It is because in this research, the researcher only applied the treatment in eight meetings. Next, the other researchers may use other technique of data collection, such as interview, in order to get more data and to support the findings in their research.

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